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'I SWEEPS THE CROSSING.'

SOME time ago there was a little boy introduced to one of the police-offices in London, as a witness of some offence, who astonished the magistrate and the audience by the betrayal of a degree of ignorance hardly conceivable. If he had been the child of an Australian savage, and now for the first time brought into contact with civilised men, he could not have been more utterly destitute of knowledge either of the things of this life, or of the hopes of that which is to come. And the wretched boy seemed to feel his degradation; for it was with a gloomy look and a sullen voice he gave in his perpetual 'No!' to the interrogatories that were intended to ascertain whether he possessed the common intelligence of a human being. But there was at length one question put—'How do you get your living?'—which roused him from his stupor; and suddenly raising his head, and looking boldly round him into the eyes that were fixed upon him, he answered in a clear voice, 'I sweeps the crossing!' He did not know how to read or write; he did not know that falsehood was less commendable than truth; he did not know that there was a God; he did not know that there was a future state—

'My poor boy,' said the magistrate in a voice of wonder and compassion, 'what do you know?'

'I knows how to sweep the crossing!' And straightway the boy felt as if there was some link between his questioners and himself, as if he was not wholly an outcast from the social system, as if he had a place and a position in the world, and as if he had a right to be in it.

This is a true interpretation of the boy's look and tone; and we venture to affirm that a corresponding change took place in the estimate formed of him by the bystanders. Their compassion remained, but their contempt was gone. They unconsciously admitted his claims. They regarded him as one of themselves, only more hardly treated by fortune; and low as his post was in the general system, they knew that it belonged to it as well as their own. They lamented his ignorance; they execrated the neglect with which he had been treated by his natural guardians; but nevertheless they respected that boy as having something to do in the community, and as knowing how to do it.

The idea we are trying to bring out will be comprehended with painful distinctness by those who have had the misfortune to be thrown into temporary want of employment. Such persons will easily call to mind that their uneasy thoughts about the future recurred only at intervals, while their permanent state of mind was composed of a feeling of isolation and insignifi-

cance. A barrier was between them and their employed brethren; they had no part in the general business; their presence was an interruption and a reproof; and they stole along the street like criminals and castaways. They made way, with a feeling of unconscious respect, for the porter staggering along under his load. They stood aside to let the living current pass, with their thoughtful eyes, determined step, and preoccupied minds. For themselves they were nothing—worse than nothing; they were an exception to the rule, a discord in the harmony—a blot, an excess, a superfluity: they had not a crossing to sweep in all the highways of the wide world!

There is another class who might seem to be in a very different position: those who are idle from choice, or from want of energy. But if we consider their lot we find so many analogies between them and the compulsory idler, that we almost come to the conclusion that want of employment is no negative, but a positive substantive thing, whose properties are only slightly modified by the character of the subjects on which they act. They belong to the class who are said to be born with a silver spoon in their mouths—a self-acting spoon, which fills the mouth without troubling the hand. It might seem, at first view, that such persons had nothing to do but to sit still and submit patiently to the comforts and luxuries of life; but if we examine them a little closer, we find them amenable to the same law of work as their fellows, and subject to the same penalties for its contravention. The boy of this class studies as hard, and learns as much at school as any other boy; and when he arrives at manhood he seeks out a crossing for himself, and applies himself to it as energetically as if his bread depended on his industry. Some of these voluntary workers are farmers, some magistrates, some statesmen, some one thing, some another; each prides himself on a particular line; and all yoke themselves quietly, and as a matter of course, in the great harness of the commonwealth. Their money purchases anything but rest; their independence is no independence of toil; and for the one avenue of anxiety in their case closed, a hundred others are open which their humbler brethren know nothing about.

If such persons resemble the workers of the other classes, so do the optional idlers of all resemble each other. The difference is merely conventional; the real character is the same. Ignorance, stupidity, and profligacy, are only superficially different in a cellar and a palace; and in both they draw down the contempt of the world. If the idleness is mere indolence—if it escapes temptation through want of sensibility, and the individual is only negatively virtuous because he has

not energy enough to be vicious, then he passes, in whatever station he may be, with simple disregard. The rank of one may excite the admiration of the vulgar, just as the rags of another may be looked upon as adjuncts of the picturesque; but in both cases the wearer, be he lord or beggar, is a complete nonentity.

Generally speaking, men of all stations are trained from their boyhood to work in some way or other; and the optional idlers are the Pariahs and outcasts of their class. But with women the case is for the most part different; and this, we venture to surmise, is the true reason why the stigma of frivolity attaches in a peculiar manner to the sex. A woman of the lower rank is rarely frivolous, because work is compulsory with her; while in the higher rank it is only a comparatively small number who, yielding to a natural taste, choose their own crossings, whether in art, needlework, music, housekeeping, economy, or any other department. Such women, however common the taste may be, have a definite place in society—there is no mistake about them; and their opinion is always listened to with respect on their own subject. They are not liable to be passed over without notice, or to be grouped in classes, or spoken of as abstractions. ‘Who is that?’ said one of the women-workers whose crossing is literature, addressing us at an evening party—‘I never know one young lady from another: they seem to me to be all sets of ringlets!’

It is both unscriptural and unreasonable to suppose, as is very commonly done, that the law of work was intended as a penalty upon fallen Adam. Adam, when this law came into operation, was no longer in Eden, but a denizen of this stubborn earth, which, like the angel at Piniel, yields its blessing only on compulsion. The penal sentence was exile; and work was accorded, not merely as a means of rendering the exile tolerable, but of turning the wilderness into a garden, typical of the lost paradise. Man was indeed to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and woman to bring forth in sorrow. In both, endurance and energy were necessary, yet in both, the result was joy and exultation. We do not live in this world by bread alone, neither are children the only sources of solace and delight; but in *any* way in which laudable perseverance is shown, in which toil is cheerfully borne, in which pain is proudly endured, the sentence of the Lord of the Garden is fulfilled. Idleness in this point of view is sin, and the wages of sin is moral death: it is a breach of the divine law, and the offender is punished even in our present life by the forfeiture of the respect of his fellow-men.

To this point we confine ourselves here. To obtain the respect of the world, we must fill properly our place as links in the social chain: we must work, and work with purpose and intelligence. Set a merchant to dig the earth with a spade, and see what kind of job he will make of his husbandry! Set a rustic labourer to the business of the counting-house, and mark with what a wild stare he will look at its simple implements of industry! Each of these men, however, is perfect in his own department: he knows how to sweep his crossing, and he does it; and the one is as necessary as the other to the work of society, and as respectable in his degree.

It is an old saying, and deserves more attention than it usually receives, that if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well. We may be dissatisfied with our present employment; we may consider that we are fit for something better; we may long to try some more feasible crossing: but while waiting for opportunity, or seeking it, let us by all means do what we are about to the very best of our ability. It is an admirable thing for a man to know, and do some one thing thoroughly. It gives him confidence in himself, and obtains for him the confidence of others. However humble his position, however unsuccessful his

efforts in the world, he has an inward satisfaction to the last. He looks back upon no wasted years, no abused powers. When death approaches, he feels that he has lived—that, in so far as work is concerned, he has fulfilled the law; and in turning away from the things of time to address himself to that new prospect which opens out like a gleam of light amid clouds and darkness, he thanks God that, to the best of his strength, and of his skill, and of his opportunities, he has swept his crossing!

L. R.

REMINISCENCES OF AN ATTORNEY.

‘EVERY MAN HIS OWN LAWYER.’

A SMARTER trader, a keener appreciator of the tendencies to a rise or fall in colonial produce—sugars more especially—than John Linden, of Mincing Lane, it would have been difficult to point out in the wide city of London. He was not so immensely rich as many others engaged in the same merchant-traffic as himself; nothing at all like it, indeed, for I doubt that he could at any time have been esteemed worth more than from eighty to ninety thousand pounds; but his transactions, although limited in extent when compared with those of the mammoth colonial houses, almost always returned more or less of profit; the result of his remarkable keenness and sagacity in scenting hurricanes, black insurrections, and emancipation bills, whilst yet inappreciable, or deemed afar off, by less sensitive organizations. At least to this wonderful prescience of future sugar-value did Mr. Linden himself attribute his rise in the world, and gradual increase in rotundity, riches, and respectability. This constant success engendered, as it is too apt to do, inordinate egotism, conceit, self-esteem, vanity. There was scarcely a social, governmental, or economical problem which he did not believe himself capable of solving as easily as he could eat his dinner when hungry. Common-sense business-habits—his favourite phrase—he believed to be quite sufficient for the elucidation of the most difficult question in law, physic, or divinity. The science of law, especially, he held to be an alphabet which any man—of common sense and business habits—could as easily master as he could count five on his fingers; and there was no end to his ridicule of the men with horse-hair head-dresses, and their quirks, quiddits, cases, tenures, and such-like devil’s lingo. Lawyers, according to him, were a set of thorough humbugs and impostors, who gained their living by false pretence—that of affording advice and counsel, which every sane man could better render himself. He was unmistakably mad upon this subject, and he carried his insane theory into practice. He drew his own leases, examined the titles of some house-property he purchased, and set his hand and seal to the final deeds, guided only by his own common-sense spectacles. Once he bid, at the Auction Mart, as high as fifty-three thousand pounds for the Holmfold estate, Herefordshire; and had he not been outbid by young Palliser, son of the then recently-deceased eminent distiller, who was eager to obtain the property, with a view to a seat in parliament which its possession was said to almost insure—he would, I had not at the time the slightest doubt, have completed the purchase, without for a moment dreaming of submitting the vendor’s title to the scrutiny of a professional advisor. Mr. Linden, I should mention, had been for some time desirous of resigning his business in Mincing Lane to his son, Thomas Linden, the only child born to him by his long-since deceased wife, and of retiring, an estate squires, to the *otium cum, or sine dignitate,* as the case might be, of a country life; and this disposition had of late been much quickened by daily-increasing apprehensions of negro emancipation and revolutionary interference with differential duties—changes which, in conjunction with others of similar character, would

infallibly bring about that utter commercial ruin which Mr Linden, like every other rich and about-to-retire merchant or tradesman whom I have ever known, constantly prophesied to be near at hand and inevitable.

With such a gentleman the firm of Flint & Sharp had only professional interviews, when procrastinating or doubtful debtors required that he should put on the screw—a process which I have no doubt he would himself have confidently performed, but for the waste of valuable time which doing so would necessarily involve. Both Flint and myself were, however, privately intimate with him—Flint more especially, who had known him from boyhood—and we frequently dined with him on a Sunday at his little box at Fulham. Latterly, we had on these occasions met there a Mrs Arnold and her daughter Catherine—an apparently amiable, and certainly very pretty and interesting young person, to whom, Mr Linden confidentially informed us, his son Tom had been for some time engaged.

'I don't know much about her family,' observed Mr Linden one day, in the course of a gossip at the office, 'but she moves in very respectable society. Tom met her at the *Slades*; but I do know she has something like thirty-five thousand pounds in the funds. The instant I was informed how matters stood with the young folk, I, as a matter of common sense and business, asked the mother, Mrs Arnold, for a reference to her banker or solicitor—there being no doubt that a woman and a minor would be in lawyers' leading-strings—and she referred me to Messrs Dobson of Chancery Lane. You know the Dobsons?

'Perfectly: what was the reply?'

'That Catherine Arnold, when she came of age—it wants but a very short time of that now—would be entitled to the capital of thirty-four thousand seven hundred pounds, bequeathed by an uncle, and now lodged in the funds in the names of the trustees, Crowther & Jenkins of Leadenhall Street, by whom the interest on that sum was regularly paid, half-yearly, through the Messrs Dobson, for the maintenance and education of the heiress. A common-sense, business-like letter in every respect, and extremely satisfactory; and as soon as he pleases, after Catherine Arnold comes of age, and into actual possession of her fortune, Tom may have her, with my blessing over the bargain.'

I dined at Laurel Villa, Fulham, about two months after this conversation, and Linden and I found ourselves alone over the dessert—the young people having gone out for a stroll, attracted doubtless by the gay aspect of the Thames, which flows past the miniature grounds attached to the villa. Never had I seen Mr Linden in so gay, so mirthful a mood.

'Pass the decanter,' he exclaimed, the instant the door had closed upon Tom and his *fiancée*. 'Pass the decanter, Sharp; I have news for you, my boy, now they are gone.'

'Indeed; and what may the news be?'

'Fill a bumper for yourself, and I'll give you a toast. Here's to the health and prosperity of the proprietor of the Holmford estate; and may he live a thousand years, and one over!—Hip—hip—hurra!'

He swallowed his glass of wine, and then, in his intensity of glee, laughed himself purple.

'You needn't stare so,' he said, as soon as he had partially recovered breath; 'I am the proprietor of the Holmford property—bought it for fifty-six thousand pounds of that young scant-grace and spendthrift, Palliser—fifteen thousand pounds less than what it cost him, with the outlay he has made upon it. Signed, sealed, delivered, paid for yesterday. Ha! ha! ho! Leave John Linden alone for a bargain! It's worth seventy thousand pounds if it's worth a shilling. I say,' continued he, after a renewed spasm of exuberant mirth, 'not a word about it to anybody—mind! I promised Palliser, who is quietly packing up to be off|

to Italy, or Australia, or Constantinople, or the devil—all of them, perhaps, in succession—not to mention a word about it till he was well off—you understand? Ha! ha!—ho! ho!' again burst out Mr Linden. 'I pity the poor creditors though! Bless you! I shouldn't have had it at anything like the price, only for his knowing that I was not likely to be running about exposing the affair, by asking lawyers whether an estate in a family's possession, as this was in Dursley's for three hundred years, had a good title or not. So be careful not to drop a word, even to Tom—for my honour's sake. A delicious bargain, and no mistake! Worth, if a penny, seventy thousand pounds. Ha! ha!—ho! ho!'

'Then you have really parted with that enormous sum of money without having had the title to the estate professionally examined?'

'Titie! Fiddlestick! I looked over the deeds myself. Besides, haven't I told you the ancestors of Dursley, from whose executors Palliser purchased the estate, were in possession of it for centuries. What better title than prescription can there be?'

'That may be true enough; but still—'

'I ought, you think, to have risked losing the bargain by delay, and have squandered time and money upon fellows in horse-hair wigs, in order to ascertain what I sufficiently well knew already? Pooh! I am not in my second childhood yet!'

It was useless to argue with him; besides the mischief, if mischief there was, had been done, and the not long delayed entrance of the young couple necessitating a change of topic, I innocently inquired what he thought of the Negro Emancipation Bill which Mr Stanley, as the organ of the ministry, had introduced a few evenings previously, and was rewarded by a perfect deluge of loquacious indignation and invective; during a pause in which hurly-burly of angry words I contrived to effect my escape.

'Crowther & Jenkins!' exclaimed one morning Mr Flint, looking up from the 'Times' newspaper he held in his hand. 'Crowther & Jenkins!—what is it we know about Crowther & Jenkins?'

The question was addressed to me, and I, like my partner, could not at the moment precisely recall why those names sounded upon our ears with a certain degree of interest as well as familiarity. 'Crowther & Jenkins!' I echoed. 'True: what do we know about Crowther & Jenkins? Oh, I have it!—they are the executors of a will under which young Linden's pretty bride, that is to be, inherits her fortune.'

'Ah!' exclaimed Mr Flint, as he put down the paper, and looked me gravely in the face—'I remember now: their names are in the list of bankrupts. A failure in the gambling corn-trade too. I hope they have not been speculating with the young woman's money.'

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Mr Linden was announced, and presently in walked that gentleman in a state of considerable excitement.

'I told you,' he began, 'some time ago about Crowther & Jenkins being the persons in whose names Catherine Arnold's money stood in the funds?'

'Yes,' replied Flint; 'and I see by the Gazette they are bankrupts, and, by your face, that they have speculated with your intended daughter-in-law's money, and lost it!'

'Positively so!' rejoined Mr Linden with great heat. 'Drew it out many months ago! But they have exceedingly wealthy connections—at least Crowther has—who will, I suppose, arrange Miss Arnold's claim rather than their relative should be arraigned for felony.'

'Felony!—you are mistaken, my good sir. There is no felony—no legal felony, I mean—in the matter. Miss Arnold can only prove against the estate like any other creditor.'

'The devil she can't! Tom, then, must look out for

another wife, for I am credibly informed there won't be a shilling in the pound.'

And so it turned out. The great corn firm had been insolvent for years; and after speculating desperately, and to a frightful extent, with a view to recover themselves, had failed to an enormous amount—their assets, comparatively speaking, proving to be *nil*.

The ruin spread around, chiefly on account of the vast quantity of accommodation-paper they had afloat, was terrible; but upon no one did the blow fall with greater severity than on young Linden and his promised wife. His father ordered him to instantly break off all acquaintance with Miss Arnold; and on the son, who was deeply attached to her, peremptorily refusing to do so, Linden senior threatened to turn him out of doors, and ultimately disinherited him. Angry, indignant, and in love, Thomas Linden did a very rash and foolish thing: he persuaded Catherine Arnold to consent to a private marriage, arguing that if the indissoluble knot were once fairly tied, his father would, as a matter of course—he being an only child—become reconciled to what he could no longer hope to prevent or remedy.

The imprudent young man deceived both himself and her who trusted in his pleasing plausibilities. Ten minutes after he had disclosed the marriage to his father, he was turned, almost penniless, out of doors; and the exasperated and inexorable old man refused to listen to any representation in his favour, by whomsoever proffered, and finally, even to permit the mention of his name in his hearing.

'It's of no use,' said Mr Flint, on returning for the last time from a mission undertaken to extort, if possible, some provision against absolute starvation for the newly-wedded couple. 'He is as cold and hard as adamant, and I think, if possible, even more of a tiger than before. He will be here presently to give instructions for his will.'

'His will! Surely he will draw that up himself after his own common-sense, business fashion?'

'He would unquestionably have done so a short time since; but some events that have lately occurred have considerably shaken his estimate of his own infallibility, and he is, moreover, determined, he says, that there shall be no mistake as to effectually disinheriting his son. He has made two or three heavy losses, and his mind is altogether in a very cankered, distempered state.'

Mr Linden called, as he had promised to do, and gave us the written heads of a will which he desired to have at once formally drawn up. By this instrument he devised the Holmford estate, and all other property, real and personal, of which he might die possessed, to certain charitable institutions, in varying proportions, payable as soon after his death as the property could be turned into money. 'The statute of mortmain does not give me much uneasiness,' remarked the vindictive old man with a bitter smile. 'I shall last some time yet. I would have left it all to you, Flint,' he added, 'only that I knew you would defeat my purpose by giving it back to that disobedient, ungrateful, worthless boy.'

'Do leave it to me,' rejoined Mr Flint with grave emphasis, 'and I promise you faithfully this—that the wish respecting it, whatever it may be, which trembles on your lip as you are about to leave this world for another, and when it may be too late to formally revoke the testament you now propose, shall be strictly carried out. That time cannot be a very distant one, John Linden, for a man whose hair is white as yours.'

It was preaching to the winds. He was deaf, blind, mute, to every attempt at changing his resolve. The will was drawn in accordance with his peremptorily-iterated instructions, and duly signed, sealed, and attested. Not very long afterwards, Mr Linden disposed of his business in Mincing Lane, and retired to Holmford, but with nothing like the money-fortune he

had once calculated upon, the losses alluded to by Mr Flint, and followed by others, having considerably diminished his wealth.

We ultimately obtained a respectable and remunerative situation for Thomas Linden in a mercantile house at Belfast with which we were professionally acquainted, and after securing berths in the *Erin* steamer, he, with his wife and mother-in-law, came, with a kind of hopeful sadness in their looks and voices, to bid us farewell—for a very long time they and we also feared.

For an eternity, it seemed, on reading the account of the loss of the *Erin*, a few days afterwards, with every soul on board! Their names were published with those of the other passengers who had embarked, and we had of course concluded that they had perished, when a letter reached us from Belfast, stating that through some delay on the part of Mrs Arnold, they had happily lost their passage in the *Erin*, and embarked in the next steamer for Belfast, where they arrived in perfect safety. We forwarded this intelligence to Holmford, but it elicited no reply.

We heard nothing of Mr Linden for about two months, except by occasional notices in the 'Hereford Times,' which he regularly forwarded to the office, relative to the improvements on the Holmford estate, either actually begun or contemplated by its new proprietor. He very suddenly reappeared. I was cooling my heels in the waiting-room of the chambers of the Barons of the Exchequer, Chancery Lane, awaiting my turn of admission, when one of our clerks came in half-breathless with haste. 'You are wanted, sir, immediately; Mr Flint is out, and Mr Linden is at the office raving like a madman.' I instantly transferred the business I was in attendance at chambers upon to the clerk, and with the help of a cab soon reached home.

Mr Linden was not *raving* when I arrived. The violence of the paroxysm of rage and terror by which he was possessed had passed away, and he looked, as I entered, the image of pale, rigid, iron, dumb despair. He held a letter and a strip of parchment in his hand: these he presented, and with white, stammering lips, bade me read. The letter was from an attorney of the name of Sawbridge, giving notice of an action of ejectment, to oust him from the possession of the Holmford estate, the property, according to Mr Sawbridge, of one Edwin Majoribanks; and the strip of parchment was the writ by which the letter had been quickly followed. I was astounded; and my scared looks questioned Mr Linden for further information.

'I do not quite understand it,' he said in a hoarse, palpitating voice. 'No possession or title in the venders: niece not of age—executors no power to sell—Palliser discovered it, robbed me, absconded, and I, oh God! am a miserable beggar!'

The last words were uttered with a convulsive scream, and after a few frightful struggles he fell down in a fit. I had him conveyed to bed, and as soon as he was somewhat recovered, I hastened off to ascertain from Sawbridge, whom I knew very intimately, the nature of the claim intended to be set up for the plaintiff, Edwin Majoribanks.

I met Sawbridge just as he was leaving his office, and as he was in too great a hurry to turn back, I walked along with him, and he rapidly detailed the chief facts about to be embodied in the plaintiff's declaration. Archibald Dursley, once a London merchant, and who died a bachelor, had bequeathed his estate, real and personal, to his brother Charles, and a niece, his sister's child—two-thirds to the niece, and one-third to the brother. The Holmford property, the will directed, should be sold by public auction when the niece came of age, unless she, by marriage or otherwise, was enabled, within six months after attaining her majority, to pay over to Charles Dursley his third in money, according to a valuation made for the purpose by competent assessors. The brother, Charles Dursley,

had urged upon the executors to anticipate the time directed by the will for the sale of the property; and having persuaded the niece to give a written authorisation for the immediate sale, the executors, chiefly, Sawbridge supposed, prompted by their own necessities, sold the estate accordingly. But the niece not being of age when she signed the authority to sell, her consent was of no legal value; and she having since died intestate, Edwin Majoribanks, her cousin and undoubtedly heir-at-law—for the property could not have passed from her, even by marriage—now claimed the estate. Charles Dursley, the brother, was dead; ‘and,’ continued Mr Sawbridge, ‘the worst of it is, Linden will never get a farthing of his purchase-money from the vendors, for they are bankrupt, nor from Palliser, who has made permanent arrangements for continuing abroad, out of harm’s reach. It is just as I tell you,’ he added, as we shook hands at parting; ‘but you will of course see the will, and satisfy yourself. Good-by.’

Here was a precious result of amateur commonsense lawership! Linden could only have examined the abstract of title furnished him by Palliser’s attorney, and not the right of Dursley’s executors to sell; or had not been aware that the niece could not, during her minority, subscribe an effective legal consent.

I found Mr Flint at the office, and quickly imparted the astounding news. He was as much taken aback as myself.

‘The obstinate, pig-headed old ass!’ he exclaimed; ‘it almost serves him right, if only for his Tom-fool nonsense of “Every man his own lawyer.” What did you say was the niece’s name?’

‘Well, I don’t remember that Sawbridge told me; he was in such a hurry; but suppose you go at once and look over the will?’

‘True: I will do so;’ and away he went.

‘This is a very singular affair, Sharp,’ said Mr Flint on his return from Doctors’ Commons, at the same time compositely seating himself, hooking his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, crossing his legs, and tilting his chair back on its hind legs. ‘A very singular affair. Whom, in the name of the god of thieves—Mercury, wasn’t he called?—do you suppose the bankrupt executors to be? No other,’ continued Mr Flint with a sudden burst, ‘than Crowther & Jenkins!’

‘The devil!—and the niece then is?’

Catherine Arnold—Tom Linden’s wife—supposed to have been drowned in the *Erin!* That’s checkmate, I rather fancy—not only to Mr Edwin Majoribanks, but some one else we know of. The old fellow up stairs won’t refuse to acknowledge his daughter-in-law now, I fancy!’

This was indeed a happy change in the fortunes of the House of Linden; and we discussed, with much alacrity, the best mode of turning disclosures so momentous and surprising to the best account. As a first step, a letter, with an enclosure, was despatched to Belfast, requiring the return of Thomas Linden and family immediately; and the next was to plead in form to the action. This done, we awaited Catherine Linden’s arrival in London, and Mr Linden senior’s convalescence—for his mental agitation had resulted in a sharp fit of illness—to effect a satisfactory and just arrangement.

Mr and Mrs Thomas Linden and Mrs Arnold arrived by the earliest steamer that left Belfast after the receipt of our letter; and much astonished were they by the intelligence that awaited them. Catherine Linden was for confirming the validity of the sale of the Holmford estate by her now authoritative consent at once, as a mere act of common justice and good faith; but this, looking at the total loss of fortune she had sustained by the knavery of the executors, and the obstinate, mulish temper of the father-in-law, from whom

she had already received such harsh treatment, could not for a moment be permitted; and it was finally resolved to take advantage of the legal position in which she stood, to enforce a due present provision for herself and husband, and their ultimate succession to the estate.

John Linden gradually recovered; and as soon as it was deemed prudent to do so, we informed him that the niece was not dead, as the plaintiff in the action of ejectment had supposed, and that of course, if she could now be persuaded to ratify the imperative consent she had formerly subscribed, he might retain Holmford. At first he received the intelligence as a gleam of light and hope, but he soon relapsed into doubt and gloom. ‘What chance was there,’ he hopelessly argued, ‘that, holding the legal power, she would not exercise it?’ It was not, he said, in human nature to do otherwise; and he commissioned us to make liberal offers for a compromise: half—he would be content to lose half his purchase-money; even a greater sacrifice than that he would agree to—anything, indeed, that would not be utter ruin—that did not involve utter beggary and destitution in old age.

Three days after this conversation, I announced to him that the lady and her husband were below, and desirous of seeing him.

‘What do they say?’ he eagerly demanded. ‘Will they accept of half—two-thirds? What do they say?’

‘I cannot precisely tell you. They wish to see you alone, and you can urge your own views and offers.’ He trembled violently, and shrank nervously back as I placed my hand on the door-handle of the private office. He presently recovered in some degree his self-possession, passed in, and I withdrew from the humiliating, but salutary spectacle, of obdurate tyrant power compelled to humble itself before those whom it had previously scorned and trampled upon.

The legal arrangements which Flint and I had suggested were effected, and Linden senior, accompanied by his son, daughter-in-law, and Mrs Arnold, set off in restored amity for Holmford House. Edwin Majoribanks abandoned his action, and Palliser, finding that matters were satisfactorily arranged, returned to England. We afterwards knew that he had discovered the defect of title, on applying to a well-known conveyancer, to raise a considerable sum by way of mortgage, and that his first step was to threaten legal proceedings against Crowther & Jenkins for the recovery of his money; but a hint he obtained of the futility of proceedings against them, determined him to offer the estate at a low figure to Linden, relying upon that gentleman’s ostentatious contempt of lawyers that the blot in the title, subjected only to his own commonsense spectacles, would not be perceived.

M A H O G A N Y.

THE literature of commerce, as embodied in price-current, trade-circulars, share-lists, &c. is usually the very reverse of popular. In the little circles of the various trades these documents are read and studied with eagerness, but in the eyes of the general public they are classed with those useful but rather dry publications, the Ready Reckoner and Interest Tables. The abbreviations, significant marks, and strangely-applied nouns and adjectives with which this literature abounds, are almost as puzzling to the general reader as the inscription on the Rosetta stone, or an advertisement at the head of the third column of the *Times*. But when things serve their purpose, few people wish to change them, and no one can deny that the peculiarities of these business documents save time, facilitate buying and selling, and if they are mysteries to many, no harm can result if many are mystified by them. But when the trader has to address a circle wider than his own, he shows that the British merchant can, when

necessary, write 'a fine Roman hand,' and give an exposition of some subject connected with his business, marked by a directness and vigour of style that if not classical, is at least clear.

There is an example of this in a little work now before us on 'The Mahogany-Tree,' by Messrs Chaloner & Fleming, timber-merchants, Liverpool. The book extends to nearly a hundred and twenty octavo pages, is profusely illustrated with drawings and maps, and though it is little else than an extended trade circular, it yet contains information of considerable importance to the public.

The discovery of gold in California seems to have led to the publication of this book; which may appear to be a 'far-fetched reason,' though in reality it is not. The mahogany chiefly used in this country and Europe generally is brought from the West India islands and Central America. There are two species grown in the East Indies, but seldom exported, and seldom used except in the ornaments and other decorations of the native temples, for which the beauty and durability of the wood eminently fit it. Of the West India islands, Jamaica, Cuba, and Hayti, have hitherto been the most productive; and the best mahogany, known as *Spanish*, and almost always selected for veneering, has been brought from thence. But in these islands, Jamaica especially, the trees are now very scarce. Those nearest the shore have of course fallen first; and though the quality of the wood in the interior, where it grows on drier and more elevated districts, is superior to that of the lower plains, yet the expenses of felling and transit increase so much, that there is little inducement to capitalists to embark in such enterprise. On the other hand, the tree, while it is among the largest and most majestic, takes a long series of years to reach maturity, and a mahogany-tree is not considered of full age and growth until it has lived out the winds and rains and heats of at least two hundred years. We should like to see the man who, in these days of 'quick returns' of capital, would plant a forest of mahogany-trees, by which nobody would be benefited until the second half of the twenty-first century of our era! But on the mainland, in the district where mahogany grows in greatest abundance and perfection, a district extending from the Isthmus of Darien northwards to Mexico, nearly 1200 miles, there are 'the densest forests of mahogany and other gigantic trees, with an underwood of many valuable tropical plants and shrubs, so matted together, that it is difficult for parties on foot to make a track into the interior.' Now if there were no other motive to the clearing of these dense forests than the rich woods that could be carried away, and the rich soils that would then be exposed, it is probable that many generations would pass before the work was done. But the whole of this district lies in the west route from the United States and Europe to California, and a large tract of these forests must be cleared to open up that route effectually. The desire for gold is greater than the desire for mahogany, and both roads and canals must be made across this district. These will ultimately facilitate the permanent settlement of the country; the forester will be the pioneer of the planter, and Europe will be as completely stocked with mahogany from Central, as it has already been with pine from North America. This beautiful wood being thus made plentiful and cheap, will of course come into general use, and to show its superior claims to be used in ship-building seems to be one great object of this publication from the Liverpool timber-yard.

The idea of a mahogany ship may perhaps be to some as extraordinary as that of an iron ship was some years ago. Certainly it would be an extraordinary sight to witness a stately ship entering some of our harbours, her sides glistening and slippery, not with salt water, but with French polish, and looking as if

she had been lined, not with copper, but with the tops of dining-tables. Such a spectacle will in all probability never be witnessed; but if any one will think of mahogany, not as it is usually seen in cabinet-makers' shops, but in the wood-yard, he will have a better idea of how a mahogany ship will look. The idea of using it in ship-building is not new. Many of the first vessels built by the Spaniards in the West Indies were constructed of mahogany, and so were those of the Spanish men-of-war, captured during some of our naval battles. One of these, the *Gibraltar*, of eighty guns, captured in 1780 by Lord Rodney off Cape St Vincent, was broken up in the royal dock-yard at Pembroke, and though 'she must have been one of the oldest ships afloat, yet all her timbers were as sound as when they were put into her, and the whole British navy, if I [Captain Chappell, secretary to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company] am not mistaken, are now supplied with tables made out of the *Gibraltar's* timbers.' So long ago as 1597, some vessels belonging to Sir Walter Raleigh were repaired with mahogany at Trinidad, in the West Indies. It is said that the best mahogany is almost entirely free from liability to dry-rot; that, being produced in the tropics, it is best fitted for tropical navigation; that it is much more buoyant than British oak—a cubic foot of the latter weighing 55 lbs., and of mahogany only 44 lbs.; and that it is much more free from acid than oak, and consequently, as reported by Dr Ure, 'iron and copper bolts and fastenings will waste much more rapidly in oak at sea than in mahogany, when each is employed in ship-building.' Several interesting experiments have been made by Messrs White, ship-builders at Cowes, Isle of Wight, to ascertain the comparative stiffness and strength of Honduras mahogany, compared with other ship-building woods. The following was the result. If the deflection from the horizontal line of a piece of Honduras mahogany under pressure be represented by 1000, the deflection of

American Yellow Pine	will be	-	1702
...	Elm,	-	1512
Quebec Oak,	-	-	1457
English Oak,	-	-	1364
Moulineau Teak,	-	-	1075
Dantzic Fir,	-	-	1049

thus showing the mahogany to present the greatest resistance; or, in other words, to be the least flexible.

Why, then, it may reasonably be asked, is this wood not used to a greater extent in ship-building? Among many other reasons, this important one appears, that it must not be used in certain parts of a vessel that is intended to be registered at Lloyd's as a first-class ship for twelve years. If the mahogany be used, then the ship can appear as first-class for ten years only. This of course renders a ship less valuable, and prevents the general use of the wood.

Turning now to the subject generally, we find in Messrs Chaloner & Fleming's work a repetition of the time-honoured anecdote of the mode in which the peculiar qualities of mahogany were first discovered in our country in 1724. 'A few planks,' it is related, 'were sent to Dr Gibbons of London by a brother, who was a West India captain. The doctor was erecting a house in King Street, Covent Garden, and gave the planks to the workmen, who rejected them as being too hard. The doctor's cabinet-maker, named Wollaston, was then employed to make a candle-box of them, but as he was sawing up the planks, he also complained of the hardness of the timber; but when the candle-box was finished, it outshone in beauty all the doctor's other furniture, and became an object of curiosity and exhibition. The wood was then taken into favour. Dr Gibbons had a bureau made of it, and the Duchess of Buckingham another, and the despised mahogany now became an article of luxury, and at the same time

raised the fortune of the cabinet-maker by whom it had at first been so little regarded.* The imports of mahogany into this country are very large. In 1829 they were 19,335 tons; in 1839, 25,859 tons; and in 1849, 29,012. Of this last-named quantity, 11,057 tons were imported into Liverpool, being 5121 from Hayti, 1025 from Cuba, and 4911 from Honduras. In the year ending 31st January 1851, the quantity imported into Liverpool was altogether 13,374 tons; or about two and a quarter millions feet of Honduras, a million and a half of Hayti, and nearly half a million of Cuban. These logs, if joined together, would form an unbroken line of eight hundred miles, or about the distance, 'as the crow flies,' between London and Vienna.

In Honduras, nearly a year is occupied before a mahogany-tree can be felled and brought to the sea-coast for shipment. A beginning is made in August: one man, more experienced than the rest, penetrates into the forest, and after making a survey of the country from the tops of the tallest trees, selects the places where the mahogany appears most abundant. Parties of men are conducted thither, platforms are erected round the doomed 'monarchs of the wood,' and the men cut them down with the axe about ten or twelve feet from the ground. After a sufficient number have been felled, it is necessary to cut roads to the nearest river, and often miles have thus to be cleared of brushwood and hillocks, and bridges thrown across ravines, &c. The cost of this is estimated as being two-thirds of the labour and expense of bringing the mahogany to a place of shipment. The roads are usually fit for use about the beginning of April, which, along with part of May, embraces the dry season. The rainy season begins about the end of May, and the object is to convey the logs across to the river just before this season sets in, so as to avoid wet, soft roads, and be in time for the swelling and increased rapidity of the river, caused by the rain. The logs are conveyed on trucks drawn by bullocks. 'A gang of forty men is capable of working six trucks, each of which requires seven pairs of oxen and two drivers, sixteen men to cut food for the cattle, and twelve to load or put the logs on the carriage. The intense heat of the sun prevents the cattle being worked under its influence, consequently they are obliged to labour in the night instead of the day-time.' The logs are tumbled into the river after being marked, and left to float down until stopped by a kind of weir previously placed at the river's mouth. The labourers follow in canoes, and disengage any logs that may have been stopped by overhanging trees or other obstructions. In Cuba, the process is not so laborious, as the wood is nearer the sea; and no cutter will fell a tree unless in the wane of the moon, as then the wood 'is free from sap, sounder, and of a richer colour, than when felled before the full.'

'The beauty of mahogany,' says Messrs Chaloner & Fleming, 'arises from its being cross-grained, or presenting the fibres endways or obliquely on the surface. These positions of the fibres, as well as their different colours, give a clouded and mottled variety to the surface; and when some of the parts are partially transparent, they give rise to a variety of lights and shades as the observer shifts his place, and reflect them in the most varied number, like the surface of a crystal. This overlapping of the fibres and their various colours are the occasion of the singular appearance which the surface of a dining-table will present to two persons when seated opposite to each other. From one side of the table portions will seem to be quite light, but in

the same, seen from an opposite point of view, the contrary effect of deep shade will be produced; and this is the reason why no painter can correctly imitate mahogany.'

What changes for the better, even in household furniture, may we not yet live to see? Some people characterise the present time as an 'age of veneer'; but however true this may be as regards the superficial acquirements of various loud-speaking classes of the community, it is not true, especially as regards the physical comforts of the people. The luxuries of the rich in one age are certain to become the necessities of the poor in another; and the day does not seem distant when the solid mahogany will supersede the veneer, and many articles now confined to the houses of the wealthy will be found imparting new grace, and giving additional comfort, to the poor man's home.

SEMINARY FOR (SHAKSPEARE'S) YOUNG LADIES.

In this age of novelty and novel applications, it is curious to observe the usual failure of authors in their manifold attempts to devise something new, and it is the more interesting on that account to notice an effort of the kind which has any appearance of success. We do not say, however, that Mrs Cowden Clarke's preparatory school for heroines is a *perfectly* new idea, since another author has already given us a view of these ladies in their superannuation and retirement. This occurs in the 'Hero,' a bad novel, by the author of the 'Heroine,' a more than commonly good one; and introduces us to the company of fat dowager Sophia Westerns and gouty Sir Charles Grandisons. If these personages have their old age, why not their nomage? And the latter is surely the more interesting of the two, and likewise the more instructive, since it shows the process by which young people are brought up to the heroic profession, and finished for the use of the dramatist and romancer. Now this is precisely Mrs Clarke's notion, although she confines her pupils for the present to the female offspring of Mr William Shakespeare.*

To disarm the objections to this little work on the score of presumption, the author plants a pretty feminine acknowledgment on the title-page—

'As petty to his ends
As is the morn-dew on the myrtle-leaf
To his grand sea;'

but for our part we find no fault with an aim for being lofty. Our author has tried to show, in her own way, what education of circumstances would be likely to bring out those materials of character which the great wizard of all times wrought into so wonderful a fabric; and we think she has done this so far with skill and feeling. The ladies, be it understood, are with her in their youth, before they have embarked in the profession, before even they know that they are intended for heroines, and certainly before they are touched by that wand which makes them spring, like so many Columbines, from the common state of young ladyhood into an enchanted life. This keeps them within the circle of our sympathies. They are the young ladies of Mrs Clarke's seminary—nothing more; and as we see them walking out in procession, we think to ourselves—alas, poor dears, if they only knew what is to come!

It will be seen that in these sketches a regular story is not demanded of Mrs Clarke, but rather an introduction to a story. The child is born, educated in feeling and fancy, and then turned over to the *Magna Parense*. The anecdotes of her early years, however, are suffi-

* In the handsome old town of Kelso, in Roxburghshire, there is a gentleman's house of good proportions, which was built about eighty years ago, and the whole wood-work of which, the floors, we believe, alone excepted, is of mahogany. The effect is inexpressibly rich and substantial.—Ed.

* The Girlhood of Shakspeare's Heroines; in a series of Fifteen Tales. By Mary Cowden Clarke. Parts I., II., III., and IV. London: Smith & Son. 1851.

ciently interesting to keep up the reader's attention; and sometimes Mrs Clarke thinks it necessary to go back a generation, and begin with the adventures of her mortal mothers and fathers, showing how it came to pass that she was born at all. The plan of the work is such as to render it impossible, by means of brief extracts, to give any idea of the author's theory of the character; although it is very easy to show by separate sketches the literary power with which the task is executed. Take this as an example, which occurs in 'Helena': it is the portrait of the Bonne:—

'A gray-headed man, whose garb at once proclaimed him to be the venerable curé of the village, sat on a wooden chair with his back towards Gerard; whilst opposite him was seated a white-capped, gold-eared, smooth-aproned, wrinkle-cheeked, but quick-eyed old dame, who seemed to be his Bonne. She was knitting diligently, but her keen eyes were not required for her work; her practised hands plied the needles with twinkling rapidity, and allowed her sharp glances to be wholly absorbed by another object.'

'Over the back of the curé's chair leaned the figure of a young peasant girl. She had drooped over the shoulder of the old man, so that her face rested nearly on his bosom, whence it looked up at the Bonne, and was indeed the object upon which her keen eyes rested.'

'By the young girl's position, her face was entirely hidden from Gerard's sight, but as soon as that bending figure met his eye, Gerard felt no hesitation in at once ascribing the voice he heard to herself. There was something harmonious in the flexible grace of the outline, that seemed to claim affinity with the gentle tones; something of beauty, purity, and attractive charm, that rendered both naturally akin.'

"But your father should not have allowed you to come alone!" retorted the Bonne with a tone as sharp as her eyes, to something the sweet voice had just said.

"I did not come alone," it replied. "My father sent Petit Pierre with me."

"Bah! Petit Pierre indeed!" was the tart exclamation of the Bonne, with a cutting flash of her eyes, and a smart snap of her knitting-needles:—"Petit Pierre forsooth! A pretty person to take care of you!—a cow-boy!—an urchin of ten years old!—a scapegrace that can't take care of himself, much less of anybody else! What could your father be thinking of?"

"My father was thinking of indulging me as usual," replied the soft voice. "You know everybody says he spoils his Gabrielle; and as he found she was intent upon going, and as nobody could be spared from the farm so well as Petit Pierre, my father sent him with me."

"I can't think why you were so intent upon coming for my part," said the old lady, darting another piercing glance, and sticking one of her needles with a sudden stab into her apron-string. "I don't mind your coming over quietly, as you do at other times, to read, and write, and study, and to talk, and confess, to Monsieur le Curé. That's all very right and proper, and what he approves, I approve of course; but why you should take it into your foolish little head to come to the fête, is what I can't fathom, and can't approve: it's not at all the thing for you, Mademoiselle Gabrielle, to come here, with only a cow-urchin to take care of you, among a parcel of strangers, and a crowd of nobody-knows who from the other villages."

'Here the old lady snatched out the knitting-needle again, and darted it into her work with a poignant thrust, and began another row, without so much as suffering her eyes for an instant to withdraw from the succession of pointed interrogatories they were aiming with such relentless acuteness into the face that looked up into hers.'

The young lady here is the mother of that Helena so

loving, so forgiving, and so persevering, who conquered fate itself, and who, unmindful of sorrows and insults, was satisfied at last that 'all's well that ends well.' Her love and endurance begin in the seminary where she and Bertram are still girl and boy; and we are early prepared for those exquisite musings of her after-life, which are in all hearts and on all tongues:—

"My imagination
Carries no favour in it but Bertram's.
I am undone; there is no living, none,
If Bertram be away. It were all one
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it, he is so above me:
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself:
The hind, that would be mated by the lion,
Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though a plague,
To see him every hour; to sit and draw
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,
In our heart's table; heart, too capable
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour:
But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy
Must sanctify his relics."

In the 'girlhood of Portia,' that high-hearted heiress and brilliant mistress of laws—she who jew'd the Jew of Venice by her wit, and was won by the instinct of love in a raffle—we can find no suitable extract; but perhaps the reader will accept as a substitute her portrait, taken after she had left Mrs Clarke's seminary for young ladies, and was metamorphosed into a heroine:—

"What find I here?

[Opening the leaden casket.]

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes!
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends: Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider; and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,
Faster than gnats in cobwebs: But her eyes—
How could he set to do them! having made one,
Methinks, it should have power to steal both his,
And leave itself unfinish'd: Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow,
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limb behind the substance."

The name of a third embryo heroine is Grnoch, and she is the daughter of a thane of Scotland. The nature of the elements that are struggling into their places in her character may be observed from an anecdote told with considerable power, which we have no room to give entire. A page had discovered a nest of martlets on a slight jutting point of the castle wall, not far from the top, and Grnoch and he, leaning over the parapet, amused themselves in watching the callow nestlings, with gaping mouths, fed by the parent birds. The young lady's ball, with which she had been playing, fell from her hand, and lodged in a crevice just below the nest.

"If I had but a ledge ever so small to set my foot upon, I could get it; I know I could!" exclaimed Culen. "It's quite close; I could be over in a moment!"

"Would you venture?" said his young mistress, looking at him approvingly.

"That I would! I could get it in an instant, if I had but a spot to step my foot upon: ever such a point would do! If the martlet's nest were not there now, that would be quite room enough!"

"But we can soon dislodge the nest, if that's all!" exclaimed Grnoch. "Here's one of Grym's long shafts—that'll do exactly to poke it off with."

"Oh no," said the page hastily.

"Are you afraid?" said she, looking at him abruptly.
"No, not that; but I don't like—I can't push the nest off," said Culen.

"Then I will! Give me the arrow!" she exclaimed.

Gruoch leaned over the edge, fixed the point of the arrow into the caked mud and earth which fastened the nest to the jutting point, loosened it, raised it, and in another moment the martlet's home, with its unfledged tenants, spun whirling through the air, and was scattered to pieces, striking against the buttresses and rough-hewn walls.

The page, excited to the adventure by his young mistress, now grasped her little hand, and climbed over the wall.

"But when he set his foot upon the jutting point which had lately held the nest, and then planted the other foot on the same spot, and after that carefully stooped down, and stretched his arm out, so as to stick the arrow into the hall, that he might raise it, and convey it to the top of the wall—he had no sooner effected this, than he suddenly felt his head reel, and his eyes swim at the unaccustomed height over which he hung suspended, merely sustained by that frail support.

"He closed his eyes for an instant, and struggled to nerve himself boldly against the thought of the small point on which he stood, and to shut out the view of the depth beneath him.

Gruoch felt the spasmodic twitch that these sensations communicated to the hand she grasped.

"Keep firm, Culen! Hold fast my hand! I have yours tight!" And the small hand never trembled or wavered, but clutched close, like a vice.

"Her voice did him good; her tone of resolution inspired him; her steady grasp encouraged him; and he was enabled to recall his dizzied senses.

"He looked up; and as he beheld that exquisite face leaning over towards him, anxiety and interest in each lineament, and wish for his success beaming in every feature, he flung up the ball from the point of the arrow, and strove to regain the top of the wall.

"But on raising his arm to the edge, he found he should not be able to obtain sufficient purchase, even when he should gain the assistance of the other hand which was now held by Gruoch, to enable him to draw himself up that height. The point upon which he stood afforded too little space, the weight of his body was too great, to allow of his climbing up again unassisted.

"The page cast one look of mute dismay towards his young mistress."

She shrieked for assistance, and he was saved; and then Gruoch turned pale, and had nearly fallen to the ground.

"And she feels thus for me!" whispered Culen's heart, as he stood rooted to the spot, his cheek flushed, and his chest heaving at the thought.

"They were wrong. Neither the page nor the man-at-arms guessed that her swoon was the effect of mere physical sympathy; a sickening sense of danger past; a reaction of the nerves—braced for the moment by strength of will, with an object in view—but suddenly relaxed from their tension by the native weakness of a frame less powerful than her spirit."

It was this same Gruoch who thus mused later in life—

"Come, come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood!
Step up the access and passage to remorse!
That no compunctionous visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep pace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances

You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dundest smoke of hell!
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry hold, hold!"

It was the same Gruoch who said still later, when walking in her frenzied sleep, 'Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfume of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand!' and the sigh that accompanied the words, transmitted to our own day—we are old enough to remember it—made the hearts of a whole people quake.

The latest published of these sketches is 'Desdemona'; but towards the close of this one the mistress of the seminary goes a little beyond her vocation, and, loth to part with the young lady she has so skilfully finished, pursues her into her heroine life. Mrs Clarke should have felt that any account of Othello's recitation of his story in the hearing of the gentle Desdemona would be lame and impotent after his own. But it must be confessed, that if this offence against good taste is deep in dye, it is small in bulk; and we think, upon the whole, that no inconsiderable portion of the public will watch the progress of Mrs Clarke's preparatory seminary for heroines.

ITALIAN OPERA IN LONDON.

COVENT GARDEN.

In order to understand the revolution which has been brought about by the orchestra in the lyric drama, we must call the reader's attention to the distinctive styles of a few of the most eminent composers, who are not only classical, but whose works are constantly reproduced, and still enjoyed; for although Handel as an operatic composer, Porpora, Scarlatti, Zomelli, Paisiello, and several others, renowned both for their dramatic and sacred styles, are justly accounted classics, they are rather names embalmed in musical histories, than composers of music whose works continue to be enjoyed by generation after generation.

Music is real, as it adheres to dramatic passion; ideal as it falls into melting melodies, or soars to grand harmonic combinations; but in Mozart we find the perfection of the art displayed in the exquisite balance of both those qualities. No composer ever followed more closely the action of his drama, and no composer ever relieved the intentional irregularity of his rhythm with more enchanting melodies; while the ingenious elaborateness of its construction is a barrier to a large proportion of his music being ever hackneyed in chamber practice. With Mozart, as with Raphael, we find ourselves in that wide and lofty region of art where every taste can appropriate something to itself—that of the million, the obvious and striking beauties—and that of the initiated, those mysterious graces and that tranquillity of effect which we find only in the aristocracy of genius.

Rossini is the prince of melodists, and his popularity has been prodigious. At first sight, the profusion of ornament seems to interfere with the dramatic passion of his works; but on a closer examination, this profusion is mostly to be found in the cavatinas of the principal singers, which comprise a very small part of the whole of an opera; and this very florid vocalisation has preserved even the most popular airs of Rossini from being hackneyed. Take, for instance, any of his commonest songs, such as the serenade *Ecco rideste* in the Barber of Seville, which not one amateur in a thousand can even attempt. Unquestionably Rossini has carried

the ornate to excess; but it belongs to his nature, which is that of a fertility, facility, and spontaneity of invention altogether unrivalled in musical history, and which in the world of sweet sounds is a miracle which equals, if it does not exceed, what was achieved in romance by the pen of Scott, or in painting by the pencil of Rubens. His comic style is quite in the 'Ercles vein,' and in buoyant hilarity he surpasses all musicians that ever lived, not even excepting Mozart himself, who rarely let himself loose in high glee. Donzelli, the greatest tenor of his day, who had played Count Almaviva in the Barber of Seville many hundred times, once assured us that this opera was, after a life-glut of music, the most enjoyable of operas to him; and yet it was written literally *currente calamo*. But as a successful author is said to be in the latter part of his career his own most serious rival, there was for a time (especially after the works of Beethoven and Weber became well known) a reaction against him; and even Coleridge, in a spirit of spurious German purism, said to a friend, 'The music of Rossini, compared with that of Beethoven, seems to me like nonsense verses.' But this one-sided folly lasted a very short time. Beethoven is more worshipped than ever; and yet Rossini stands on a pedestal of his own that nothing can shake.

His immediate Italian successor was Bellini, who also was a melodist, and a stranger to the complication of German instrumentation; but in tenderness he is without a rival. His pathos is frequently so exquisite as even to go to excess; and while a certain vein of dignity lurks under the tenderness of Rossini, that of Bellini is often suggestive of hopeless prostration, such as in the celebrated 'Qui m' Accolle' in Beatrice di Tenda. Bellini was not prolific, but what he did was carefully digested. In fact he was somewhat the converse of Rossini; for while the profuse ornament of the latter was spontaneous, the simplicity of Bellini was elaborate. His temperament was melancholy, his manners soft and retiring; his person slender; a sepulchral gloom hung over his compositions; and to make all complete, he died in youth. Rossini, on the other hand, according to the last accounts from Italy, is in the fulness of fame and of personal form, robust, hearty, vigorous, and one of the *bon vivants* of Bologna la Grassa; for while from time immemorial Venice has been surnamed the fair, Bologna has rejoiced in the epithet of the lusty.

Next in prominence to Rossini and Bellini on the modern Italian stage is Donizetti—a most prolific composer, whose works are characterised by great versatility. In his genius there was no lagging and flagging: like the Arab courser, he stood more in need of the bridle than of the spur. His Elisir shows that he approaches the nearest of modern writers to the excellence of Rossini. In Lucrezia Borgia he is equally successful in the treatment of the darker and more violent passions; while in Anna Bolena, and in several other operas, there is a depth of tenderness that frequently reminds one of Bellini. But the great error of this most plastic and versatile genius was diffusion. Had he, instead of writing several scores of operas, concentrated his energies on a dozen, his fame would unquestionably have sailed down the stream of time with a heavier freight. As it is, the operas we have named, and half a dozen others, have become stock pieces in every Italian theatre. But his mortal career has been closed in a manner even more painful to contemplate than that of Bellini, for he descended to the grave from the lunatic asylum.

Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, are the chief Italian composers that for a series of years have held possession of the Queen's Theatre, and who may be called the most eminent masters of the school of melodists, as

contrasted with that of the German instrumentalists, who have now taken a firm hold of the Italian operatic stage, and who, without detracting from the peculiar merit of the melodists, give a grandeur and variety to the Italian lyric drama in London such as was never before known. This distinction must be taken in its broad acceptance; for the Italian melodists are not deficient in good scoring; on the other hand, no one who has heard the masterpieces of the German instrumental school—such as Robert the Devil and Freischütz—can be insensible to their delicious flow of melody.

This Gothic invasion of the Italian stage of London has had several immediate causes, the most prominent of which are the disruption of the old company of the Queen's Theatre, the establishment of Covent Garden, and last, not least, the mighty influence of the genius of Meyerbeer on his day and generation. We have already adverted to the successive bankruptcies of former Opera directors, and so long as the Opera was a precarious speculation, there was no thought of a second theatre; but no sooner did the principal singers find that Mr Lumley was likely to accumulate a large fortune, without making any corresponding advance in their salaries, than the project of Covent Garden as an Italian Opera was started. The partisans of the new theatre included Grisi, Mario, Tamburini, and other singers of the very highest class; and, above all, Signor Costa as the musical director, a gentleman of unrivalled experience in this capacity, and possessed of an amount of talent and energy which has been shown not only in the difficult task of overcoming preliminary difficulties, but of producing the greatest works of the greatest masters, in a manner to elicit the hearty approbation of the fiercest critics.

But in so huge a speculation as a rival to the Queen's Theatre, the most consummate science and the most melodious voices could have done nothing without an adequate capital to set the machine afloat. This at first sight would seem a difficult matter, for the chain of bankruptcies of the older establishment formed a barrier sufficient to deter any experienced member of the money market from such a speculation; but a young gentleman, possessed of more musical enthusiasm than worldly prudence, stood forth on the occasion. This was Mr Delafield, a scion of the brewing-house of Combe, Delafield, & Company, who had recently come into a fortune of between £90,000 and £100,000. His share in the brewery was sold, and the product devoted to the reconstruction of Covent Garden, from the floor to the roof, nothing but the shell having been suffered to remain of the old edifice. The result, as is well known, was a bankruptcy after a couple of seasons, the details of which have been so recently given in the newspapers of the day, that it is unnecessary to reproduce them; and the theatre is now going on at the risk and charge of several of the principal performers, including Signor Costa. The rivalry with the Queen's Theatre is maintained by parties who are not weighed down by the heavy liabilities that pressed upon Mr Delafield, whose patrimonial thousands may be called the sunken piles on which the new fabric of Covent Garden stands.

But with all this sacrifice of original capital, it is much to be doubted if Covent Garden could have been kept open unless the entertainments had presented that novelty and variety of character by which they are distinguished. There is no ballet, and consequently all attention is concentrated on the operatic department. Signor Costa, the musical director, is about fifty years of age, and was educated at the Conservatory at Naples, and unites in his person the popular sentiment of Italian music with the profound science of Germany; and it is his production of the great works of the German school of instrumentation that has enabled Covent Garden to stand its ground. For a quarter of a century and more, Meyerbeer has had a

great and increasing *reputation*; but the impetus to his popularity in England has come from Signor Costa's direction of Covent Garden, for the muse of Meyerbeer is like that of Milton, a majestic beauty, somewhat distant and unfamiliar.

In order to characterise this remarkable composer, his music may be presented as the most striking contrast to that of the Italian melodists we have named; In natural genius he falls far short of Rossini, and yet his numbers will live as long as those of a Mozart or a Beethoven, being written not for an age, but for all time; and no composer can be pointed out who has so husbanded his powers by skilful elaboration and inexhaustible pains and patience. Meyerbeer is a German Jew, but his works are unlike those of the other German Jews, who in literature are more remarkable for showy than solid qualities. The genius of Meyerbeer is essentially Teutonic. He cares nothing for a quick brilliant success: he looks upon the composition of a butterfly opera which lives a short season as a mere waste of time. In like manner, when somebody asked a friend of Beethoven why he had composed only one opera, the answer given was, 'A lioness drops only one cub.' Meyerbeer's work, 'Il Crociato in Egitto,' is an illustration that there is no greatness attainable by imitation. He then imitated Rossini, and 'Il Crociato' is the least effective of his compositions. Not less than six laborious years were spent in the composition of 'Robert le Diable'; and of all modern operas, it is that which best unites the graceful forms of Italian melody with the massive colouring of German instrumentation. The 'Huguenots,' which followed, is as remarkable as a work of art, but lacks inspiration, except in some pieces. It is a difficult matter to unite grace with strength; the one is generally at the expense of the other; and the 'Huguenots' is massive and cyclopean rather than remarkable for ideal beauty of form, and has since been surpassed by 'The Prophet,' Meyerbeer's last production; which, after fifteen years of silent labour, he has given to the public as a work which will send his name down to distant ages and distant nations. Its detached melodies will not stand a comparison with those of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, and therefore 'The Prophet' can never be popular chamber-music. Italian melodies are like the pictures of a gallery, complete in themselves, and may be enjoyed even if removed; while the various parts of 'The Prophet' are like the columns of a hall, admirable as parts of the structure, but incapable of separation without ruin. A work such as 'The Prophet' must be regarded as a whole, and is a mixture of the grand oratorical style of Handel and the fervid passion of Gluck, with that rich massive orchestral power in which Meyerbeer shows himself as a worthy occupant of the throne of Beethoven.

In order to understand this great artist and his new school, we shall attempt to set 'The Prophet' in a few lines before the mind's eye and ear of the reader; and first let us remark, that the vaulting ambition of Meyerbeer eschews all subjects of a quiet or partial character: he must have a broad canvas, with numerous figures, bold light and shade, movement, variety, and complication, as a vehicle for a description of lyric drama, not illustrative of an incident, but of some great historical epoch, abounding in incidents. In 'Robert le Diable,' the middle ages immediately preceding the period of the Crusades, surrounded with the splendours of chivalry and the terrors of superstition, seem to awake after a slumber of eight centuries. 'The Huguenots' is taken from that part of French history of which the bare chronicle is thrilling romance; and in 'The Prophet' we have that most extraordinary of the episodes of the Reformation, in which the Anabaptists of Munster recognised John of Leyden as prophet, priest, and king.

This opera commences with a view in Holland, at the gate of a castle, and presents us with a glance at the humble early fortunes of John, who was a Dutchman, and of that exercise of feudal and priestly power which lent each other a hand in precipitating the social and religious revolution of the period. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, we see John of Leyden, a poor tailor and innkeeper, interrupted in the preparations for his marriage with Bertha, by the lord of the manor interposing his authority. The exercise of this feudal privilege not only shocks John and his mother, and appals his bride, but excites the indignation of a people ripe for revolution; and three Anabaptist elders, clad in deep black, with stern countenances, appear to fortify their resolutions, as the representatives of the superiority of spiritual over temporal power. This is the business of the first act, the music of which is managed with consummate skill, commencing with the melancholy pipe of a peasant sitting on the bridge, as if deplored the excesses of priestly and feudal domination, and then rising progressively to a musical climax in the so-called 'flail chorus,' which is the first full outburst of popular frenzy.

In the next act, the bride flees, and is hidden by John of Leyden; but his mother being brought before him by the myrmidons of the feudal lord, and threatened with death if she be not given up, the bride comes forth and generously surrenders herself. John becomes frantic, and his thirst of vengeance prepares him for any hallucination. On recounting a strange dream, he is persuaded by the elders to assume the character of prophet and deliverer of the people from feudal and priestly tyranny. In the following act, the revolutionary drama advances. Winter has incrusted the wide plains of Westphalia with nipping frost. The people are conquerors. Priests, barons, and ladies, terror-struck, beg their lives of the frenzied mob; and we see that the reformation was so far no mere matter of theological subtleties. Hundreds of skaters pass and repass on the river below, while darkness covers the earth, and a grand choral-hymn resounds through the camp, while a sun, produced by electrical light, is seen to rise in the east.

We are then carried into the city of Munster, which has become the possession of the Anabaptists (A.D. 1534), and where John of Leyden was crowned with great pomp, during which scene is presented one of the most striking and dramatic situations that can be conceived. The mother of John enters the cathedral, and recognises in the impostor her own son; but he, struck with guilt, feels that to own his humble mother will be ruin. She wishes to appeal to his filial affection; but the elders menace her with death, and John himself, his criminal ambition gaining the mastery, asks her, with an agitated and a guilty countenance, who she is. And after a scene of the highest interest, we see her maternal affection so strong, as to deny her own identity, in order not to expose her son; on which the credulous mob proclaim him to have performed a miracle, in restoring reason to the insane old woman who believed herself to be his mother. The effect of this scene is electrical. The grand coronation-march with which it is heralded—the pealing organ—the loud anthem; and, with this conjunction of dramatic effect and inspiring music, the acting and singing of Madam Viardot, who soars to the highest flight of tragic declamation—realise that union of the fervour of Gluck with the majesty of Handel, and a harmonic richness unknown to either, which has made the Prophet a landmark in musical history. As for the fifth act, although containing some fine things, and essential to the conclusion of the career of John of Leyden, whose grandeur was succeeded by defeat and death, it falls off; and both author and composer would have done well to finish with the cathedral scene.

Covent Garden, in prices and in the class of habitués, differs little from the Queen's Theatre. With its dark crimson hangings and its semicircular form, it has a richer and more spacious appearance than the Queen's, with its yellow damask and horse-shoe form, but is less light and elegant in general effect. Having, as already stated, no ballet, it appeals less to the eye; but no expense is spared in costume and scenery, as accessory to the gratification of the ear; and few things are finer than the production of even operas of light music, such as the 'Masaniello' of Auber—with the azure atmosphere and the unruffled sea that washes the Bay of Naples, its pictureque dancing groups and soft Circcean melodies wooing the most obdurate ears from the first chorus to the last finale, when the eruption from the crater shows the mountain ribbed with seething lava.

As for the company, its excellence is fully on a par with the high class of music selected, and with the efficiency of the orchestra. The soprano prima donna is Madame Grisi, who has been for nearly twenty years at the head of her profession, and whose dramatic experience has been gathering new strength ever since her first appearance in the Queen's Theatre, in 'La Gazzetta Ladra,' in the year 1833, she having appeared the previous season in Paris, where her cismontane reputation was made. Her voice is in freshness not greatly abated; and although in delicacy of quality it does not equal that of Jenny Lind, Grisi is altogether the first dramatic soprano now on the stage. The first contralto is Madame Viardot Garcia, the sister of the late Malibran; and of her voice we may say that in fulness of volume and compact beauty it is not equal to that of Albion, yet in dramatic power she not only surpasses that singer, but may fairly challenge comparison with any tragic actress of our own generation. Old opera frequenter have been heard to say that since the days of Siddons, half a century ago, the stage has presented nothing superior to the acting of Viardot in 'The Prophet.'

The principal male singers are Mario, Tamburini, and others, a notice of all of whom would swell this article to an unconscionable length. The former may be called the finest tenor of the day; for although he cannot combine the same amount of power and sweetness in a few of the highest chest notes, as Signor Tamberlik, the other first tenor of Covent Garden, yet in fulness, steadiness, equability of voice, grace of ornament, and dramatic experience, he takes the precedence of that singer. We may add that Mario is a stage name, as this gentleman is an Italian count of ancient family.

The first barytone is Signor Tamburini, who was born at Faenza in 1800, and is now consequently fifty-one years of age. He is the son of a horn-player of the cathedral of that town, who brought his son up to his own instrument, though from weakness of chest the lad gave it up, and took to sing the contralto parts in the cathedral. At the change of his voice, he settled into a low barytone, and first appeared at Ceuto, the birthplace of Guido, in 1818, which led to an engagement in Naples, Milan, Vienna, and Paris. His voice is capable of taking bass parts; but his power lies in the florid barytone, as in 'Corradino' and 'Pirata.' If in a notice of the principal singers of Covent Garden we omit Madame Castellane, Zelger, Tagliafico, and several others, it is from want of space, and not from lack of appreciation of their merits.

It may be easily imagined how formidable such a rivalry must be to the Queen's Theatre. Mr Lumley has been induced to bring out Shakespeare's 'Tempest,' with all the aids and appliances of Halevy's music, and the full strength of his company; but in spite of all this expenditure and labour on a noble subject, there is no appearance of Covent Garden closing its doors. It is much to be regretted that some arrangements cannot be made for concentrating the strength of both

companies in one effective and lucrative establishment, leaving the other open for English opera; that is to say, for not only classical foreign operas translated into English, but as an arena for the employment of English singers, and of the rapidly rising school of English musical composers. An essential feature of the plan should be a scale of prices for the English opera, such as would render good music more accessible to the middle classes. For the direction of such a theatre Mr Balfe has been unanimously designated by the native musical public as beyond all comparison the most fitting individual: and we close this article with a very short account of the musical career of the only English composer who has ever been universally popular on the continent of Europe.

Mr Balfe was born in Dublin in the year 1808, and when a youth of only sixteen, was so admirable a violin player, as to attract the attention of Mr Charles Horne; and being brought forward by him, played concertos at several oratorios in England, in the palmy days of Braham and Mrs Salmon. During this tour an incident occurred which had a great influence on his fortunes. Count Mazzara, a wealthy Roman travelling in England, having heard a ballad composed by Balfe, entitled 'The Lover's Mistake,' at once advised him to go to Italy and study composition; while at the same time he offered him a home in his own palace. Thus favoured by fortune, Balfe, at the age of seventeen, set out for Italy, and, by a singular coincidence, the Countess Mazzara finding in him a great resemblance to a son she had lost, the young artist was adopted by her.

For two years Balfe laboured at composition under Federici, then one of the best contra-puntists of his day; and in 1827, when only nineteen years of age, he tried his youthful skill in the composition of the music of a ballet for the theatre of La Scala, in Milan, on the subject of 'La Perouse.' This being successful, he was introduced to Rossini, then musical director of the Italian opera at Paris, and commenced his theatrical career as bass singer at a salary of L.600, playing Figaro to Sartoria Rosina, in the Barber of Seville, for nine successive nights. Balfe revisited Italy in 1830, and had composed his first opera, entitled 'Atala,' founded on Chateaubriand's romance of that name; but unfortunately having lost a portion of his luggage in travelling, his maiden opera never saw the light. But a circumstance soon occurred which again put his powers into requisition. Being engaged for a year, in 1830, as first bass-singer at Palermo, the revolutionary spirit of that year passed from the arena of politics to that of the arts. The chorus revolted, from some motive that does not appear, and the director having said to Balfe, 'Oh for an opera like "Il Matrimonio Secreto," that would enable me to do without a chorus!' Balfe wrote his second, and produced his first opera, 'I Rivali.' The attempt was successful, and made him well known as a composer to the Italian public; and having, in 1832, sung with Malibran at the Fenice of Venice, that accomplished singer and actress made his talents known to Mr Bunn, and in 1835 his first English opera, the 'Siege of Rochelle,' was produced in Drury Lane. This established his reputation, and was succeeded by many others, which it is not necessary to particularise; but the most successful of which was the 'Bohemian Girl,' produced in 1843, with such signal success, that he was called to Vienna, where the opera stood the test of the critical audience of a metropolis, which had seen the triumphs of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. Mr Balfe has also written several operas for the French stage; and the last accounts of him state that, having composed a new opera, it is to be presented to the throng of strangers expected to crowd London during the forthcoming Exhibition. Let us hope that it will be successful, and that this specimen of our lyric drama will take a place which, until the

advent of Mr Balfe, has been unanimously refused to Great Britain in this department of the 'arts and industry of all nations.'

A TWELVEMONTH IN CALCUTTA.

HINDOO COLLEGE—PARSEE FAMILY—DRESS—EMBARKATION OF ELEPHANTS—FANCY BALL.

December 5.—We had long promised ourselves a visit to the Hindoo College, but never made this intention out till to-day. It was a very interesting sight. The boys looked well and lively, the teachers good-natured, but pale and worn, at least those among them who are European. Several classes are taught by their own pundits, who seemed especially pleased to see us, or probably any strangers. The friend who accompanied Edward, Arthur, and me, examined the highest English class for our benefit, to the great joy of the teacher, who complains that the gentlemen of the presidency never come to see how the boys get on. They were just now preparing for a public exhibition, and were all quite aware of the value of a few private rehearsals. The pupils we were to hear questioned first were all fourteen years old or upwards, they spoke English fluently, seemed intelligent, looked bright, and apparently liked being thus noticed, perhaps in the hope of the half-holiday usually asked for by any lady visitor. In history they were reading our own, and had arrived at the reign of Elizabeth. They were perfectly correct in all facts, names, and dates; and they drew such just conclusions from these premises, as evidenced great care in their instructor, not only in teaching them what was past, but its application to the present, thus bringing forward the reflecting powers of his pupils as they proceeded; for no two gave the same answer, nor were any two of exactly the same opinion either as to the propriety of events, or the characters of the actors in them. They were perfectly acquainted with the great men in all departments who had figured in that or any preceding reign. If one of them were at a loss, another could always set him right; and their replies were all made without the book—extempore, as were the questions put to them. We could detect neither shyness, nor forwardness, nor envy among them—it was altogether a very interesting scene. We had then a little bit of amusement. Arthur gravely demanded their opinions upon some of the political matters of the day. They gave them readily, as from minds quite made up—ultra liberal in the extreme, their ideas all taken from the newspapers of that side in which they are deeply read—Lord Brougham their hero. They next gave us some readings from Shakespeare's scenes, taking each his character, and they really astonished us. They dote upon Shakespeare, understand him, feel his sentiments and his poetry, and give nearly perfect expression to his meaning. Their voices are naturally soft, low-toned, and melodious; and having been well taught from the beginning to attend to the sense more than to the rhythm of the verse, their recitation was curiously beautiful. The head boy, a lad of seventeen, was particularly at home in his appreciation of this 'oracle of nature.' He quite amazed us by his explanation of obsolete words and inverted passages, and by the occasionally fine expression of his voice and eye.

We next put some questions to the junior classes: geography, grammar, history, arithmetic, all were satisfactorily answered. The drawing-class was very good—maps, landscapes, and figures very promising. A class of some little boys, of from four to ten years of age, was almost the most amusing of any in the schools. They were only in the rudiments, which were taught to them very agreeably. They were lively little creatures, some of them very pretty. It is easy to distinguish the high-caste boys from those of lower orders: independent of their better dress, their look and bearing is

quite superior. It is certainly a great step to have so far conquered the deeply-rooted prejudices of the natives in this respect, as to have brought so many children of different castes together at this Hindoo college, where the young Brahman stands up in the same form and sits on the same bench with his lower-caste brethren, or maybe with those of no caste at all; but it is curious to know how entirely they keep aloof from contamination when out of school—immediately then resuming their own peculiarly exclusive habits. I observed one natural curiosity in this collection of young Hindoos: a boy with hair quite red; his complexion was in nowise different from other natives, but he had an odd countenance, and looked more stupid than the rest of the children.

6th.—We went this morning to visit the Parsee ladies; but before entering on the particulars of our interview, I must tell you that we had each of us secret reasons for waiting upon these new acquaintance. I am preparing some figures for your cabinet of costumes, which I wish to make as true to nature as possible: I therefore intended making a most minutely-accurate examination of toilette matters; while Caroline's purpose was to borrow some jewels, as she is going very splendid to a fancy ball, which is to be given in a few days by a very spirited party of bachelors. We met with no difficulties on preferring our requests. I rather think, indeed, they were flattered by feeling able to oblige us; for they took every kind of trouble to assist us, all appearing and crowding about us—women, and children, and attendants—seemingly most anxious to be of use, and quite amused and interested with our schemes—the old mother above all. She sent her daughters here and there on all sorts of messages, and chattered and laughed unceasingly. They had a pretty long journey to go occasionally; for they are at this time not living in their garden-house, but in their immense factory of a residence in the denser part of the native town, which serves for warehouse, counting-house, storehouse, and ordinary domicile for all ramifications of these extensive families. These town-houses are for the most part of great size, generally built round the four sides of a large court, without one good room in all the vast number of private apartments. In this Parsee abode there are as many as three hundred small dark cells, into half of which I am sure but little light or air can enter, and where furniture would seem to be as little necessary; for with the exception of some few bedsteads, there was none as far as we could see. The verandas are spacious, and the house-top better still after the sun is down. By the by, Edward has taken to play chess up there of an evening—native fashion—with his new friend the race-horse man; and there they sit, as grave as two Turks, till the darkness of night over-shadows them.

But I must go back to the dress of the Parsee ladies. It is surprising how little clothing they wear, for they were not in full dress on this occasion; their garments were of homely texture, and there were no shoes and stockings. A short inner vest of muslin just reaches the waist; in fact, it is a mere body with short sleeves: the drawers are very full. They reach down to the ankles, but only up to the hips, round which they are drawn, thus leaving a good wide space of naked skin between them and the little body. A small tight silken jacket goes on over these, and the long web of silk or cotton, called the saree, completes the dress. There is some dexterity required to arrange the saree, for no pins are used. One end is tucked into the belt of the drawers behind, then some yards are plaited up in the hand—passed between the legs—brought up in front, and fastened to the string of the drawers before—tucked into the belt, falling down in pretty drapery in front, but scanty and ugly, and indeed scarcely decent, behind, although the other end, thrown over the head and shoulders, falls low about the figure. When I had thoroughly

examined them, the Parsee ladies, as of right, as minutely scrutinised me; and the fits of laughter elicited by my complex attire—the exclamations of wonder—the numerous inquiries as to the use or necessity of certain articles of my clothing, and surprise at the forms so curiously contrived for them, cannot be set down as altogether complimentary to the fashionable toilette of an Englishwoman.

The jewels were lent with pleasure, and were to be carried to us next day by the eldest son. They were of such value, I should not have liked to borrow them; but Cary had no fears.

8th.—This was a day of real bustle, for the Coolie bazaar is a long way down the river, and we were to be there by ten o'clock, to see the embarkation of the elephants. The large male elephant declined to put his foot upon the jetty or pier, along which it was intended he should walk towards the steamer; which had been warped up so close, that it was expected one turn of the crane erected there would have hoisted the huge animal right over the main hatch, when he could have been immediately lowered into his berth. When we came in sight of him, he was down on his knees, for about the twentieth time, in token of his refusal to move in obedience to the mohaut seated on his neck. Many times the spur of the hook induced him to rise slowly till his broad back towered above the surrounding crowd, his head turned to the ship, but one step forward he would not make. So he kneeled down again. When standing, he looked to be about twice the height of the tallest man. The female elephant, longer tamed and better trained, had walked to the end of the jetty and back again several times to show him the way, but he seemed aware of his greater weight, and that what would support her might yield under him; for his great foot having once struck the sounding planks, no power could move him to venture on them. After a couple of hours of vain attempts, the whole plan of operations had to be altered. The ship was unmoored, and swung round some twenty yards higher up the stream, and the elephants were to swim to her side. The two enormous creatures turned at the bidding of their guides, walked leisurely along the quay, and entered the water with a sort of stately docility, which gave a certain dignity to their unwieldy ugliness. They were both of them well cased in slings made of strong canvas, and the larger one carried several men upon his back engaged in arranging the cords attached to his canvas-casing. The mohauts prepared for steady seats by closely embracing the necks of the animals with their legs. A thick bed of mud extends close to the bank, through which they had to make their way before attaining the deep water. On entering this, the slingsmen slipped off, and the female quietly leading, the male followed, both sinking knee-deep at every step, and raising up their gigantic limbs for the next stride with apparent difficulty. When they got beyond their depth, they rolled off like enormous porpoises, swimming in the direction required, in obedience to the iron nook. They soon neared the vessel, but close up to her the larger elephant would not go: no pricking, no coaxing, no menaces, affected his dogged determination to keep his distance. At last he wheeled about and began to swim back to shore. The mohaut got him turned again, and brought him to the ship-side once more, when round he wheeled again; and so the game continued. There appeared now to be much consultation on board. A crane had been erected on the deck close to the hatchway, for the purpose of the disembarkation at Suez, and this, it seems, it was resolved to make use of in the present perplexity. The opening of the main hatch had been considerably enlarged to admit the bodies of these monstrous creatures, and about this opening, just beneath the crane, stood the consulting parties, certainly in some dilemma.

At length a boat was lowered from the steamer, men

with long cords having iron hooks fastened to the end of them, descended into it, and rowed as near the poor frightened elephant as they dared. Two or three of them then jumped into the river, and swimming towards him, warily climbed upon the huge back as it lay sulky upon the water. They fastened their hooks into the rings fixed in the slings bound round him, and then slipped off, without his attempting to molest them, carrying the cords attached to the hooks in their hands. Half of these cords were thus fastened to each side of the elephant; and they were respectively caught by parties of men on the quay and on the deck of the steamer, and passed through pulleys attached to a windlass and a capstan. Now began an exciting scene. An immense crowd covered the shore, boats innumerable lay upon the water, and a large company stood upon the deck. The preparations being completed by signal-masters on the quay and near the capstan, the monstrous creature began to move. As his immense carcass rose helpless in the air, a nervous half-stifled cry burst from all the multitude. The animal himself was exceedingly terrified, as was seen by the nervous twitchings of his head and legs, though he was perfectly quiescent under this astounding mode of transport. The ropes from the ship pulled him steadily towards her, those from the shore kept him as steadily back; so that there could be no jerk to hurt him. The men who worked the ropes kept their eyes fixed on the signal-masters, whose directions were all given by various motions of the arms. Regularly worked the ropes, lengthening on the shore side, shortening on the ship side, till the elephant swung slowly over the deck above the open hatchway, the mohaut still upon his neck, bravely keeping his seat there, and coaxing and fondling his huge charge during the whole operation. They descended slowly together, the man and the elephant—the elephant sinking down the abyss slightly struggling, and the man—just at the critical moment, when a more than ordinary nervous plunge might have dashed him against the crane—sliding easily from his dangerous position, and standing safe upon the deck. Then a shout did rend the air: a waving of hats and handkerchiefs accompanying the wild huzzas: it was a sort of delirium for the moment. One of our party told us that the first time an elephant was put on board ship at Calcutta, not one native would believe such an undertaking to be of possible accomplishment. They fully expected to see the English machinery at fault, and to have a laugh at the Bellatee sahibs. Their astonishment at the result was proportionably great, their admiration unbounded. For me, I grudged the pacha his present, thinking of all the fear the poor animals had gone through, and all the discomfort they would have to undergo. The hatchway had hardly been sufficiently enlarged—it only barely admitted this huge freight; and an enormous foot escaping from a loosened cord, caused the male elephant to do some damage to the poultry coops. One of these was quite broken by the blow, and all its imprisoned inmates sent fluttering about, more alarmed than pleased by their sudden liberty.

Another accident happened afterwards that might have been more serious. The female elephant, though more easily led to the vessel, was less manageable during her descent to her berth; and in her struggles she knocked an officer down before her a fall of many feet through both the decks. He was stunned, but not otherwise injured, although some hours elapsed before he came quite to himself. As soon as these creatures were fairly secured below, they were regaled with sugar-cane, which they devoured with an avidity quite reassuring as to any ill effects upon their nervous systems from the exploit of the morning. The male is eleven feet high, and fifteen feet long—very large for this part of the world, where the general size is much less than that of the Ceylon or Bombay elephant. We

heard from some friends who remained later than ourselves, that after eating the sugar-cane, the large elephant became much excited, knocked all his berth to pieces, and conducted himself so violently it was dangerous to go near him : they had some difficulty in chaining him properly up. He really could not be a pleasant shipmate, and so probably most people have thought ; for almost all the passengers who had intended going to Suez in this steamer, have forfeited their passage-money rather than run the risk of an introduction to such society.

9th.—The fancy ball took place last night. I don't exactly know what Cary called her dress : it was Eastern certainly, and suited her well, which I suppose was all she wanted. She wore a turban, a tunic, and full drawers—all of rich materials glittering with gold and jewels. Her diamond stomacher was worth a thousand pounds : her three rows of large pearls for a necklace near as much : her earrings were very costly : the aigrettes and clasps about her head, some of them priceless, as were the ornaments she stuck about her sleeves ; for everywhere she possibly could place them, she sewed on brilliants. She was all in a blaze, her husband said. He wore a real Turkish dress, which he had got at Constantinople some years ago. Mr Black was an Albanian pirate, in a very splendid dress, with such handsome pistols in his belt—two pair of them, and a cutlass, and a great number of richly-studded baldriccs, and sashes, and other adornments. Helen wore the costume of a Greek girl, which suited her peculiar style of beauty so well. We who knew the family history were quite amused by some one saying, when they walked about together, that the pirate had run off with his bride : at which he laughed, and she blushed, as a willing captive might be supposed to do.

THE LENTIL IN SCOTLAND.

The *Ervum lens*, although a new field-crop in Scotland, in its cultivation as an article of food, is so well known abroad, especially in Catholic countries, that the very name *Lent* is unquestionably derived from the use of lentils during that period of abstinence from all sorts of animal diet. As green crop for cattle-feeding, however, we can trace its introduction into Britain three hundred years back: the date which Mr Lawson gives being 1545. But he adds in his 'Agriculturists' Manual,' that 'although well adapted to our climate, its cultivation has not been attended to—for what good reason it is difficult to discover, unless, like other items of husbandry practised by the monks in the vicinity of their settlements, it was driven out with the Reformation. The vine, which was general in the south of England, shared this fate. The *Ervum lens* belongs to the general order *leguminosæ*; in generic character its calyx is five-parted; segments linear, acute; corolla, sub-equal; pod, oblong, and two and four seeded. Six species are natives of the northern hemisphere. The species termed botanically *Ervum tetraspermum hirsutum*, presents us with those troublesome weeds of the New-Testament parable called tares. They are natives of England; but the *Ervum lens*, the lentil, is a native of the south of Europe. The eatable lenticular seed is of very ancient culture. On the authority of Genesis xxv. 34, it distinctly formed the mess of red pottage for which Esau sold his birthright. Several references to it occur elsewhere in holy writ, as in 2d Sam. xvii. 28; xxiii. 11; and Ezek. iv. 9. It constitutes at the present time much of the food of the common people of many continental states, being not only the cheapest, but the most palatable and nutritious diet. For the value of *twopence* six men may dine well on lentils; and as this extraordinary fact will doubtless excite the attention both of the poor and the benevolent, we shall mention the various modes of cooking adopted.

Steep the lentils an hour or two in cold water; then

take them out and place them in a goblet, with enough of water to cover the surface; adding a little butter, some salt, and flavouring with parsley. Place the whole over a slow fire. They must boil slowly; and care must be taken to add water enough to keep the surface covered, but merely covered.

They may be boiled with ham, bacon, sausage, or merely with water and salt, or prepared afterwards with onion à la matre d'hôtel.

In schools, barracks, or large boarding establishments, they are often boiled in salt and water; and when cool the water is poured off, and they are dressed with oil, vinegar, &c. like a French salad.

When the lentil is bruised or ground into meal, it makes an excellent *purée*, with wildfowl or roasted game.

It is prepared also like peas for soup, dumplings, puddings, &c.

One single pound of meal makes soup sufficient for fifteen persons; or a pudding-dumpling, *purée*, &c. for six; and the pound costs from 2d. to 8d. in France or Germany.

Being exceedingly nutritious, lentils would make a capital substitute for potatoes; and it is mainly on this ground that the recent efforts of a French gentleman, M. Guillerez, of Castle Street, Edinburgh, have been directed to bring about their adoption as a British field-crop. But why is it that, having free trade in corn of all kinds, this foreign crop is not in the meantime more largely imported for British consumption? This is a singular circumstance, for it affords one of the most popular of all dishes abroad; the finest or small brown kind—which is also the most prolific—being esteemed a delicacy by the rich, and highly relished by the poor. The very paucity of the supplies that have lately reached us of the flour of lentils have tempted those by whom it is vended as food for invalids, to palm off mixtures of bran-meal, and other leguminous products, for the genuine article. And the high price put upon the packages doled out so mysteriously, and puffed so extensively, would preclude the public from enjoying the advantages of this cheap and plentiful description of food, even if their contents were legitimate.

The character of the lentil, both intrinsic and economical, would seem to point it out as a proper substitute for the potato; and the important question is, whether it would thrive under general culture in this soil and climate as luxuriantly as that root? One of our scientific growers (Lawson) has already given his testimony in the affirmative—'Agriculturists' Manual,' p. 95. Dr Palmekheill failed, indeed, in an attempt to cultivate them twenty years ago, at Canonmills, near Edinburgh; but Messrs P. Lawson & Son ripened specimens of the seed of the larger lentil at their Meadowbank nursery in 1835. They were sown on the 7th April, were in flower on the 6th July, and ripened the second week of August. The only systematic and persevering attempts, however, to ripen the seed, and acclimatise the plant, have been those of M. Guillerez. These have been carried on at Queensferry; and in the course of his experiments, it has been found that seed of his own produce ripened there, and proved more luxuriant than continental seed newly imported from France, given to him in exchange by Lord Murray. Here, then, there is room to hope that, if not already predisposed for vegetating kindly in our climate, the lentil is in a fair way of being acclimated.

M. Guillerez's plants grew, we believe, to two and even three feet in height—a luxuriance seldom attained in France: and yet his experiments could hardly be said to have been made under circumstances the most favourable for the growth of the plants. A dry warm soil is requisite for the lentil. This gentleman, however, sowed his at Queensferry in heavy garden-ground, manured with sea-weed and common manure. He put in the seed at various periods, some

two months earlier than others, without experiencing any sort of advantage from anticipating the stated period for sowing; and, on the whole, has arrived at the conclusions, that in this country the best time for sowing is a little later than that for peas—about the middle of March. There should be from one to one and a half bushels to the acre; with probably a row of horse-beans between every row of lentils, to prevent their falling, and to save the expense of propping, which is never incurred by the foreign farmer. In other respects their treatment, harveating, &c. are similar to those bestowed upon the pea. The plant is of a close branching habit, producing from 100 to 150, and often a considerably greater number of pods. M. Guillerez counted 134 on a single stalk, and has found his pods to contain from 1 to 2, and occasionally 3 seeds each. In gardens they may of course appear in pretty thick rows, 18 inches or 2 feet apart, and 5 inches' distant from each other. Their appearance in this situation is improved by their being propped.

There are three cultivated varieties of the lentil—the lentil of Provence, as large as a pea, with a luxuriant straw, better adapted for culture as a tare than as a grain for human food; the yellow lentil, less in size, easily unhusked, and convertible into flour, serving as the base of the preparations so much and so long puffed in the newspapers; and the small brown lentil, the best for use, the most agreeable in flavour, and preferable to all others for haricots and soups. The two last-named varieties are those which have been grown, and their seed ripened, in the open air at Queensferry.

It was a very pleasant sight to see this novel and agreeable-looking product in bloom at Queensferry in the middle of June, covering the drills with a profusion of delicate white blossoms. There was even a peculiar charm in the fairy-like tracery of its soft green foliage. In the beginning of August it was properly podded, and within a few days of being ripe. In short, the experiment, on however limited a scale, was entirely successful; and it is to be hoped that the prosecution of an object so desirable will not be lost sight of. It is always to be remembered that such an addition to our resources must be of essential importance to the poor, whether as a substitute for the potato crop or not; for a pint of the meal, or of the lentils entire, simply unhusked, will produce at this moment two large and substantial family dishes, at a cost of sixpence; and if cultivated in our own fields, at a much less expense. This vegetable, so generally used in France in boarding-schools, in the army, in large families, and in hospitals, is one of the most nutritious and succulent serials in existence—cheaper, more wholesome, and more susceptible of digestion and assimilation as human food, than any description of peas or beans—making delightful soup, very savoury to the taste when cooked with ham, or when its farine is used for puddings or purée with any kind of meat. In short, it wants but a knowledge and appreciation of its qualities among us to create a demand which our farmers, having now been shown the way, will greatly advance their own interests in studying to gratify.

EGGS OF THE EPIORNIS.

Until very lately, ostrich eggs were regarded as the largest in existence, but they are mere dwarfs when compared with those which M. de Malanau has just sent over from the island of Reunion, and which are to be placed in the Paris Museum. Their history is as follows:—In 1850, M. Abadie, a captain in the merchant service, saw in the hands of a Malagasy a gigantic perforated egg. The information obtained from the natives led to the discovery of two other equally large eggs, and some bones. These were all sent to Paris; but one of the eggs was unluckily broken. The others arrived in safety, and M. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire has presented them to the Academy.

These eggs differ from each other in form: one has its two ends very unequal; the other approaches nearly to the form of an ellipsoid. The dimensions of the latter are:—Largest diameter, 12½ inches; smallest diameter, 8½ do.; largest circumference, 33½ do.; smallest circumference, 28½ do. The thickness of the shell is about the eighth of an inch. This great Madagascar egg would contain about seventeen English pints, and its gross volume is six times that of an ostrich egg, and equal to 148 ordinary hen eggs. The first question to be decided was—Are these the eggs of a bird or of a reptile? The structure of the shells, which is strictly analogous to that of the eggs belonging to large birds with rudimentary wings, would have sufficed to determine the question; but it has been completely set at rest by the nature of the bones which were sent with them. One of them is the inferior extremity of the great metatarsal bone of the left side: the three-jointed apophyses exist, two of them being nearly perfect. Even a person unskilled in comparative anatomy cannot fail to see that these are the remains of a bird. The gigantic bird of Madagascar, or epornis, appears to have differed in many respects from the struthionidae, and may henceforward become the type of a new species in the group of *rudipennae* or *brevipennae*. The height of the epornis, according to the most careful calculations made by comparative anatomists, must have been about twelve English feet, or about two feet higher than the largest of the extinct birds (dinornis) of New Zealand. According to the natives of the Sakalamas tribe, this immense creature, although extremely rare, still exists. In other parts of the island, however, no traces of belief in its present being can be found. But there is a very ancient and universally-received tradition amongst the natives relative to a bird of colossal size, which used to slay a bull, and feed on the flesh. To this bird the Malagasy assign the gigantic eggs lately found in their island.

SONNET.

BY CALDER CAMPBELL.

A THOUGHT of joy, that rises in the mind
Where sadness hath been sitting many an hour!
A thought of joy, that comes with sudden power
When least the welcome guest we looked to find!
Who sends that thought? Whence springs it? Like
the wind,
Its passage is invisible! The shower
That falls is seen—the lightning o'er the bower
Passes with fiery wing, and leaves behind
Rent boughs and withered buds! But air and thought
Come and depart, we know not how! Be sure
From Heaven the solace is! Lo, as men note
A gorgeous butterfly, whose tremulous wings—
All bright with crimson meal—a glory flings;
So joyful thoughts are seen, and sent by angels pure!

HORN HOUSES OF LASSA, THE CAPITAL OF THIRET.

There is a certain district in the suburbs where the houses are built entirely with the horns of cattle and sheep. These odd edifices are of extreme solidity, and present a rather agreeable appearance to the eye; the horns of the cattle being smooth and white, and those of the sheep being black and rough. These strange materials admit a wonderful diversity of combinations, and form on the walls an infinite variety of designs. The interstices between the horns are filled with mortar. These are the only houses that are not whitewashed. The Thibetians have the good taste to leave them in their natural state, without endeavouring to add to their wild and fantastic beauty. It is superfluous to remark, that the inhabitants of Lassa consume a fair share of beef and mutton; their horn-houses are an incontestable proof of it.—*Cape Colonist.*

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